

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 EB-11 COME-00 AID-20 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIEP-02

RSR-01 /160 W

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R 281100Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1232

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FORT LAMY

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CM, FR

SUBJECT: REVISION OF CAMEROONIAN-FRENCH AGREEMENTS

REF: (A) YAOUNDE 2320; (B) YAOUNDE A-61, JULY 17, 1973

1. SUMMARY: HAVING SIGNALLED INTENTION ADVISE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH FRANCE MORE THAN ONE YEAR AGO, GURC HAS STILL NOT REVEALED WHAT IT WANTS AND HAS BEEN IN NO HURRY TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS. NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS FORESEEN IN KEY AREAS OF DEFENSE AND MONETARY ARRANGEMENTS. MAIN PROBLEMS AS SEEN BY CAMEROON PROBABLY LIE IN ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS TIES, BUT
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UNCLEAR WHETHER GURC EVEN HAS DECIDED ON ITS DEMANDS. THIS

UNCERTAINTY MAKING LOCAL FRENCH SOMEWHAT UNEASY, ALTHOUGH THEY FORESEE NO INSUPERABLE PROBLEMS. IN KEEPING WITH AHIDJO'S SOOTHING STYLE AND RECOGNITION BY HIM (AND OTHERS) OF IMPORTANCE TO CAMEROON OF CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE, THERE IS EVERY REASON TO EXPECT REVISION OF ACCORDS TO ENCOMPASS REALISTIC ADAPTION -- ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES -- TO EVOLVING REALITIES RATHER THAN DISRUPTIVE AND ACRIMONIOUS BREAK FROM EARLY POST-COLONIAL TIES.

2. PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM OCAM (REF. A) CONTINUES TO BE INTERPRETED HERE AS A MOVE TO ENHANCE THE IMAGE OF AN INDEPENDENT CAMEROON. AT THE SAME TIME SOME SEE IT AS FORESHADOWING A TOUGHER LINE BY GURC IN UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE ON THE REVISION OF THE COOPERATION AGREEMENTS.

3. WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PIN DOWN OUR LOCAL CONTACTS ON AREAS OF EXPECTED DIFFICULTY IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS AND ON NATURE OF DEMANDS THAT GURC MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO MAKE. GIVEN PRESIDENT AHIDJO'S PENCHANT FOR NOT REVEALING HIS HAND UNTIL HE IS READY TO MOVE, THEIR INABILITY TO OFFER ENLIGHTENMENT IS NOT SURPRISING.

4. TWO MAJOR AREAS WHICH PROVED DECISIVE IN FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH MADAGASCAR AND MAURITANIA-MILITARY BASES AND MONETARY ARRANGEMENTS - DO NOT SEEM TO POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR CAMEROON. AHIDJO HIMSELF POINTG THIS OUT IN HIS LE MONDE INTERVIEW (JULY 3), STATING THAT THERE ARE NO FRENCH MILITARY BASES IN CAMEROON AND THAT MONETARY PROBLEMS "WERE SETTLED AT THE END OF LAST YEAR IN A MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK, JOINTLY WITH CHAD, C.A.R., GABON AND CONGO" (REFERENCE TO AGREEMENT ON CREATION OF NEW CENTRAL BANK). SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE THE OBJECTIONABLE FEATURES OF THE VARIOUS COOPERATION AGREEMENTS TEND TO BE MORE OF FORM THAN OF SUBSTANCE.

4. IN DISCUSSING THE SITUATION WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR DUPUY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE ON LEAVE LAST WEEK THESE IMPRESSIONS WERE CONFIRMED. AT THE SAME TIME I SENSED THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT UNEASY OVER CAMEROON FAILURE TO DATE TO SHOW HAND. HE CONFIRMED THAT GURC HAS NOT PRESENTED ITS REVISION PROPOSALS NOR HAS IT ASKED FOR A DATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN. IF GURC SIMPLY WANTS TO REMOVE OR REVISE OBJECTIONABLE PARTS IN EXISTING AGREEMENTS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD TAKE ONLY A FEW DAYS, DUPUY ASSERTED. IF THEY WANT TO COMPLETELY REWRITE THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE MUCH MORE DRAWN OUT. WE AFREED THAT IT WAS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT PRESIDENT HAS NOT YET REACHED DECISION ON GURC APPROACH.

5. DUPUY STATED THAT THE FRENCH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN SEVERAL ACTIONS IN ANTICIPATION OF NEGOTIATIONS. THEY HAVE INFORMED GURC

THAT THEY RENOUNCE THEIR AUTOMATIC CLAIM TO DEANSHIP OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THEY HAVE TURNED DOWN GURC REQUEST THAT UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLOR IMBERT (FRENCH AID) REMAIN ANOTHER YEAR. HE WILL BE RETURNING TO FRANCE THIS FALL AND GURC NOW GRAPPLING WITH DELICATE PROBLEM OF CHOOSING A LOCAL SUCCESSOR. PROFITING FROM TANANARIVE UNIVERSITY UPHEAVAL LAST YEAR, GOF SEES NO POINT IN EXPOSING ITSELF TO POLITICAL RISK OF OVER-STAYING ITS WELCOME IN CAMEROON. GOF LIKEWISE DECIDED NOT TO REPLACE DEPARTING HEAD OF NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION BUT IN ABSENCE ANY LIKELY CAMEROONIAN CANDIDATE, IT FINALLY AGREED TO SUPPLY A NEW HEAD FOR A SHORT PERIOD ONLY. FRENCH HAVE TURNED OVER TO CAMEROONIANS ALL MILITARY COMMANDS EXCEPT FOR OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL (ECOLE INTER-ARMES) WHICH GURC HAS REQUESTED THEY RETAIN FOR TIME BEING. DUPUY CONJECTURED SOME REVISION AND UP-DATING OF MILITARY ACCORDS WOULD BE REQUIRED BUT SAW NO DIFFICULTIES. (I ASSUMED HE WAS REFERRING INTER-ALIA TO PROVISION SPECIFYING THAT CAMEROONIANS SHOULD TURN TO FRANCE FIRST FOR THEIR MILITARY SUPPLY NEEDS BEFORE LOOKING ELSEWHERE.)

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6. PROBABLY THE MAJOR AREA OF CURRENT CAMEROONIAN DISSATISFACTION RELATES TO THE STATUS OF FRENCH BUSINESS COMMUNITY. THE ECONOMY IS SLUGGISH AND MUCH OF BLAME IS PLACED, EXAGGERATEDLY I BELIEVE, ON FRENCH. RATHER THAN REINVESTING BENEFITS HERE, THE LARGE PART FLOWS TO FRANCE. GURC IS OBVIOUSLY SEEKING NEW MECHANISMS TO ESTABLISH MORE NATIONAL CONTROL OVER OPERATIONS OF FOREIGN FIRMS AND TO STEM OUTFLOWS OF FUNDS WITHOUT IMPOSING RESTRICTIONS WHICH COULD DAMAGE INVESTMENT CLIMATE AND JEOPARDIZE SOME OF ADVANTAGES PROVIDED BY MEMBERSHIP FRANC ZONE (NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR INSURANCE OPERATIONS WHICH ESTABLISH GREATER LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTROL OVER INSURANCE INVESTMENTS ARE EXAMPLES OF SUCH MECHANISMS - YAOUNDE A-61). TO WHAT
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EXTENT GURC WILL HAVE CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO SUGGEST TO ON THIS GENERAL PROBLEM WE UNABLE TO SAY. IT WOULD BE SURPRISING IF EFFORT WERE NOT MADE TO OBTAIN MULTI-YEAR COMMITMENT ON FRENCH AID AS PARTIAL QUID PRO-QUO FOR ADVANTAGES FRENCH BUSINESS ENJOY IN CAMEROON.

7. AHIDJO'S RELAXED TIMETABLE FOR NEGOTIATIONS (A FEW WEEKS OR A FEW MONTHS) SUGGESTS THAT HE HAS NOT YET DECIDED ON TIMING AND QUITE POSSIBLY EXTENT OF NEGOTIATING DEMANDS. HE IS PROBABLY WAITING IN ORDER BETTER TO ASSESS CONSEQUENCES OF THE MAURITANIAN AND MALAGASY AGREEMENTS. MOREOVER, WITH IVORY COAST, NIGER, SENEGAL AND OTHER FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES NOW GETTING ON THE BANDWAGON OF REVISION EXISTING ACCORDS, AHIDJO MAY BE WAITING TO GET SOME FEEL FOR HOW FAR THESE OTHER GOVERNMENTS ARE LIKELY TO GO. DESPITE THE ATTRACTION OF MOVING QUICKLY ENOUGH TO REMAIN IN THE VANGUARD HE WOULD NOT WISH TO FIND HIMSELF IN THE POSITION OF HAVING ACCEPTED LESS THAN THE OTHERS. HIS OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO DO SOMEWHAT BETTER, BUT NOT AT THE COST OF BREAKING UP A RELATIONSHIP WHICH HE SEES OF CONTINUING MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO CAMEROON'S DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS.
MOORE

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